

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1. (Currently Amended) A method for providing antimicrobial properties to a composite item, comprising:

immersing a composite item in an aqueous bath comprising an organic antimicrobial agent, wherein said organic antimicrobial agent is a silicone based quaternary ammonium salt;

separating the immersed composite item from the bath; and

drying the separated composite item; and

reusing the bath in a further immersing step on a second composite item,

wherein the composite item is a member selected from the group consisting of composite yarns, composite fabrics and composite articles.

Claim 2. (Cancelled).

Claim 3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said composite item is a composite yarn.

Claim 4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said composite item is a composite fabric.

Claim 5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said composite item is a composite article.

Claim 6. (Original) The method of claim 5, wherein said composite article is a member selected from the group consisting of gloves, aprons, socks, filters, shirts, pants, undergarments, and one-piece jumpsuits.

Claim 7. (Original) The method of claim 3, wherein said process is a continuous process.

Claim 8. (Original) The method of claim 3, wherein said process is a batch process and said composite yarn is in a form of composite yarn wound on a bobbin.

Claim 9. (Original) The method of claim 4, wherein said process is a continuous process.

Claim 10. (Original) The method of claim 4, wherein said process is a batch process and said composite fabric is in a form of composite fabric wound on a roll.

Claim 11. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said organic antimicrobial agent is present in said bath in an amount of from 0.1-2 % by weight of the total bath.

Claim 12. (Cancelled).

Claim 13. (Cancelled).

Claim 14. (Cancelled).

Claim 15. (Original) The method of claim 5, wherein said immersing step is performed in a household clothes washer and said drying step is performed in a household clothes dryer.

Claim 16. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said drying step is performed at a temperature of from 50-100°C.

Claim 17. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said drying step is performed at a temperature of from 70-90°C.

Claim 18. (Original) A composite item selected from the group consisting of composite yarns, composite fabrics and composite articles, having antimicrobial properties and prepared by the method of claim 1.

Claim 19. (New) A method for providing antimicrobial properties to a composite item, comprising:

immersing a composite item in an aqueous bath comprising an organic antimicrobial agent, wherein said organic antimicrobial agent is silicone based quaternary ammonium salt that is a copolymer of a long chain (C₁₂-C₂₀) alkyldimethylaminotrihydroxysilylpropyl ammonium halide and a chloroalkyltrihydroxysilane;

separating the immersed composite item from the bath; and

drying the separated composite item,

wherein the composite item is a member selected from the group consisting of composite yarns, composite fabrics and composite articles.

Claim 20. (New) The method of claim 19, further comprising the step of reusing the bath in a further immersing step on a different composite item.

Claim 21. (New) The method of claim 19, wherein said composite item is a composite yarn.

Claim 22. (New) The method of claim 19, wherein said composite item is a composite fabric.

Claim 23. (New) The method of claim 19, wherein said composite item is a composite article.

Claim 24. (New) The method of claim 23, wherein said composite article is a member selected from the group consisting of gloves, aprons, socks, filters, shirts, pants, undergarments, and one-piece jumpsuits.

Claim 25. (New) The method of claim 21, wherein said process is a continuous process.

Claim 26. (New) The method of claim 21, wherein said process is a batch process and said composite yarn is in a form of composite yarn wound on a bobbin.

Claim 27. (New) The method of claim 22, wherein said process is a continuous process.

Claim 28. (New) The method of claim 22, wherein said process is a batch process and said composite fabric is in a form of composite fabric wound on a roll.

Claim 29. (New) The method of claim 19, wherein said organic antimicrobial agent is present in said bath in an amount of from 0.1-2 % by weight of the total bath.

Claim 30. (New) The method of claim 19, wherein said silicone based quaternary ammonium salt is a copolymer of octadecylaminodimethyltrihydroxysilylpropyl ammonium chloride and chloropropyltrihydroxysilane.

Claim 31. (New) The method of claim 23, wherein said immersing step is performed in a household clothes washer and said drying step is performed in a household clothes dryer.

Claim 32. (New) The method of claim 19, wherein said drying step is performed at a temperature of from 50-100°C.

Claim 33. (New) The method of claim 19, wherein said drying step is performed at a temperature of from 70-90°C.

Claim 34. (New) A composite item selected from the group consisting of composite yarns, composite fabrics and composite articles, having antimicrobial properties and prepared by the method of claim 19.